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## BABBLE OF THE BOULEVARD

(Special Correspondence of THE COLLECTOR)

THOSE who find interest in the reading of modern French novels, and who know, by reputation, at least, the authors of the same, may be curious to learn the compensation which they, the writers, receive for their work. Nearly all of the lighter fiction of the day, which our transatlantic cousins, the Americans, have the advantage or disadvantage of perusing in book form, first makes its appearance in this country as a *feuilleton*. A *feuilleton* is a continued story appearing by installments in the daily or weekly press, the most interesting parts of which are naturally terminated for "continuation in our next." No daily is without its *feuilleton*, and the majority run two at a time. They appear, as a rule, at the bottom of the first and third page, the news columns being shortened for their accommodation. Some are new; some are old—very old. In one case the writer receives the top price for his manuscript; in the other he is paid a royalty. For example, *La Vie Populaire* is at this moment publishing "La Dêbâcle," by Emile Zola, a story which will not make its appearance in book form until June. The *Echo de Paris*, a morning journal, with a large circulation, is printing in installments "Le Regiment," an old romance by Jules Mary, and which I read over two years ago. Zola gets for his *feuilleton* something like 25,000 francs, and Mary a nominal sum. In both cases the *feuilleton* is a good advertisement for the book, which, to the author, is naturally the chief source of revenue. For an ordinary article upon any subject he chooses to touch, Zola may readily command 500 francs. Alphonse Daudet receives almost as much. Aurelien Scholl, Hector Malot and Francisque Sarcey are paid about 250 francs for a two-column article.

Short stories, dialogues or criticisms by "Gyp" (la Comtesse de Martel), Armand Silvestre, Jean de Richepin, Georges Ohnet and Catulle Mendès are accepted at 200 francs each. Richepin may in some instances receive more, but he writes a sad lot of trash at times. It is said, with perhaps some degree of exaggeration, that Jules Verne refused to contribute to the press at lower rates than a franc a line. Emile Gaboriau certainly asked and was paid quite as much as this; while old D'Ennery, of "Two Orphans" fame, whom I encountered only a few weeks since hobbling out of the Porte St. Martin, where the drama in question is still being played to crowded houses, gets, I presume, quite as good prices as Verne. Victor Cherbuliez, Claretie, Jean Lemoine, du Camp, Edouard Hervé, Henri Meilhac, Ludovic Halévy, Jules Simon, Duruy, Leon Say, Leconte de Lisle and Jules Lemaitre, all, with the exception of the latter, being members of the French Academy, receive 150 francs a column. To persuade men like Ernest Renan, Legouvé, Taine, Rousset, Mézières, Boissier, Emile Ollivier and the Duc d'Aumale, all serious and heavy writers, to touch pen to paper, requires, I do not doubt, even a larger sum.

There are no men in America or England, either, who are paid as much for literary composition as Frenchmen. Such periodicals as the *Revue Bleue* and the *Revue des Deux Mondes*, for instance, offer higher rates than the *Athenaeum* or *Spectator* ever thought of doing. When we remember that Sterne died a pauper, that Johnson received but enough to pay the funeral expenses of his mother for "Rasselas," and that Milton sold "Paradise Lost" to his publisher for £5 sterling, those among us who write for bread may thank our stars that we live in the nineteenth century.

Everybody in France, with the exception of infants in arms and in some cases the female sex, smoke cigarettes. Every smoker rolls his own cigarettes, and nine out of ten use a paper through the striated fibres of which may be distinguished the word "Job." The paper does not take its name from the individual whose patient sufferings are recounted in the Old Testament, but from its inventor and manufacturer, Monsieur Pierre Bardon Job, recently deceased at the age of sixty-five. A noted amateur of paintings, antiques, books and coins, and with an abundance of money to gratify his taste, the aged *curieux* left behind him a rich collection of these objects. As is the case with many of our modern Oldbucks, the inclinations of the younger members of his family differ from those of the sire, so that at a not far distant date the Hôtel Drouot will catalogue and sell his numerous treasures. The sale will be noted with more than usual interest by buyers at the capital.

That ours is an age of iconoclasm no one will attempt to dispute. We have been told that Columbus was a pirate and Washington no better than he ought to have been. La Pucelle d'Orleans never so much as had her hair singed, and Bacon owes the inspiration for his plays to Mr. Donnelly. Now comes an image smasher who tells us that Diogenes never lived in a tub. At the period during which the old cynic had his existence there were no tubs, or, more correctly speaking, casks. The Greeks and Romans kept their wine in great earthen vessels, very much like those employed in some parts of the Iberian peninsula at the present day, and designs of which in bas relief may still be seen upon the walls of the Villa Albini. Whereas

this interesting discovery will not compel us to commence our education over again, it should at least materially alter the character of the engravings and woodcuts that may hereafter be published in popular histories of the ancients.

In June next, after we shall have embraced the opportunity of visiting both Salons, will be inaugurated, under the patronage of the Duc d'Aumale, a display of what is termed "The Exhibition of a Hundred Masterpieces," a loan collection gathered from the richest private galleries of Europe. The idea is not a new one. It is about nine years ago, if I mistake not, that precisely another such exhibit attracted the attention of Parisian amateurs. That the second and present one, however, shall be quite as novel as its predecessor, it is provided for that no canvases shall figure in the catalogue that have been on view in Paris within the past quarter of a century. The first show was, from all reports, a great success, netting for charity over 100,000 francs, or \$20,000. The June, 1892, exhibit has likewise been planned and arranged for the benefit of the poor. This time the result will no doubt prove more gratifying than the first, for the committee going farther afield in its work of selection, proposes to avail itself of offers from a number of prominent Austrian, Belgian, Dutch and English collectors. The walls of the Petit Gallery in the Rue Sèze are already rented for the exhibition.

American as well as continental artists will learn with regret that many of the old and picturesque houses of Rouen are crumbling one after the other. Age and the elements are completing their work. A fortnight since a trembling structure in the Rue Martainville fell as if an earthquake had rent its foundations. Last week a house in the Rue du Bac, No. 21, followed suit. Happily the Tour de la Grosse Horloge is yet proof against many winters of storm, sleet and rain, though the quaint, narrow thoroughfare which leads up to it, and which with its kaleidoscopic display of color forms a rare bit of perspective, is rapidly changing in its general appearance.

Visitors at the Ecole des Beaux Arts may, in addition to the other attractions there to be seen, avail themselves at the present moment of viewing a collection of almost 250 paintings in oil and water color from the brush of Léon Germain Pélouse. The artist, who died last year, was one of those geniuses who have had no master in art except nature, but who have applied themselves with such a degree of determination and energy to a truthful delineation of the same that they stand clear and distinct among the prominent landscapists of the age. Pélouse, through the simplicity of his treatment and the pure atmospheric effects with which each of his canvases breathe, proves himself more than ever before a worthy rival of that magician of the palette and brush, Théodore Rousseau. The museums as well as the private collections of France have been ransacked to complete, in a measure this, the work of a great painter's life.

Say what you will, there is no school in which one can better learn the secrets of nature than nature herself, and those who by repeated experiment have at last solved the mysteries of sky, sea, pasture and woodland show us how much greater is reality to supposition and certitude to hypothesis. The instructor at the School of Fine Arts is, without question, of great value in teaching his pupils the elements of the craft. They know that by taking a certain quantity of red, green and white upon the tip of their brush and applying it in a certain way to their canvas that it produces the effect of a piece of salmon. They readily acquire the knack of painting innumerable pieces of salmon. But ask them to paint a slice of codfish—impossible! Nobody ever told them how. The man who chooses nature as a guide depicts and represents her as he knows and feels her to be. The graduate of the schools tries to do the same without departing from the limits of his education. The result of the one and the other is apparent.

The Bibliothèque Charpentier has just issued the sixth volume of the "Journal des Goncourts," a melange of biography and anecdote from the industrious pens of the brothers once known among their associates as the "Siamese Twins of Literature." The authors have in their journal accomplished the idea strived at in Alphonse Daudet's "Trente Ans de Paris." Daudet, however, is a comparatively young man, and his colloquial record of events and celebrities must necessarily be of a limited nature. The surviving member of the de Goncourt brotherhood, on the other hand, now guides his pen with difficulty, and in this the last volume of his life signs his abdication as a man of letters. He has, nevertheless, like the distinguished Prince of Benevento, left a mass of material which his executors are at liberty to publish twenty years after his death, and in which "agreeable truths" will be sacrificed at the altar of *vérité absolue*.

PARIS, March 20, 1892.

JOHN PRESTON BEECHER.